

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----023998 291651Z /45

O P 291634Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4614
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04924

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, XF, PBOR, UNSC, LE, IS, SY, UK
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: FCO VIEWS

REF: STATE 79930

1. DEPT'S FIRST ROUND-UP OF WHERE WE STAND ON SOUTH LEBANON (REFTEL) WAS MOST HELPFUL AND EMBOFF PROMPTLY USED IT BRIEFING TOMKYS IN FCO. TOMKYS HAD LITTLE REACTION ON POLICIES OR ACTIONS PROPOSED, AND OBSERVED THAT AT THE MOMENT HMG IS STANDING ON THE SIDELINES. HE PUT HIS FINGER ON THE PROBLEM THAT UNIFIL'S ROLE HAS NOT BEEN COMPREHENSIVELY DELINEATED, SINCE THE ISRAELIS WANT IT ON THE LITANI AND THE ARABS CONTEND IT IS TO TAKE OVER ALL TERRITORY FROM WHICH THE

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ISRAELIS WITHDRAW. TOMKYS THOUGHT OUR IDEA OF USING LEBANESE POLICE FORCES IN THE AREA ADMIRABLE IF THEY ARE INTENDED AS A COVER FOR WHAT IN PRACTISE WOULD BE SYRIAN-CONTROLLED ACTIVITY, THUS RELIEVING THE SYRIANS OF THE ODUM OF APPEARING TO CONTROL THE PALESTINIANS.

2. HOWEVER, IN THIS AND RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH

EMBOFF TOMKYS HAS DEPRECATED THE IDEA THAT EFFECTIVE LEBANESE ARMY UNITS CAN BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY. HIS REACTION TO DISCUSSIONS OF DETERMINED EFFORTS TO PRODUCE SUCH UNITS HAS PARALLELLED THE TERSE REACTION OF THE SYRIAN DEFMIN REPORTED IN JERUSALEM 877 ("TLASS GUFAWED"). BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INFORM TOMKYS AS SOON AS FEASIBLE OF US PROPOSAL TO SEND A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM (PARA 16 OF STATE REFTEL AUTHORIZED PASSING INFO ON TEAM ONLY IF ASKED), AND

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EXDIS

ON WHAT ASSUMPTIONS IT IS BASED. FOR EXAMPLE, DO WE ESTIMATE THAT LEBANESE BATTALIONS OF MIXED RELIGIONS CAN BE CREATED?

3. WITH REGARD TO UNIFIL'S LOGISTICAL PROBLEM POINTED OUT IN PARA 5 OF REFTEL, TOMKYS SHOWED EMBOFF MESSAGE FROM UK MISSION TO UN INDICATING THAT UNIFIL IS ALREADY PREPARING TO REQUEST SPECIFIC FORMS OF LOGISTICAL ASSISTANCE FROM BRITISH BASES IN CYPRUS. PERHAPS

THESE BASES COULD TO SOME DEGREE BE SUBSTITUTED FOR
THE VULNERABLE BEIRUT AIRPORT.

4. COMMENT: TOMKYS' OBSERVATION THAT AT THE MOMENT
HMG IS STANDING ON THE SIDELINES REFLECTS THE AFTER-
MATH OF THE "HIGHEST LEVEL" BRITISH DECISION NOT TO
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ALLOW BRITISH LOGISTICAL TROOPS TO FUNCTION ON THE
GROUND IN LEBANON (LONDON 4682). DURING A DISCUSSION
WITH AMERICAN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN IN THE IPU
DELEGATION ON MARCH 23, OWEN CANDIDLY VOLUNTEERED THAT
HE WAS FEELING "A LITTLE BRUISED" BY THE FACT THAT
HIS EFFORT TO PROVIDE A BRITISH CONTINGENT AS PART OF
UNIFIL HAD BEEN OVER-RULED. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD TRY
TO BUILD ON WHAT WE HAVE BY UTILIZING THE CYPRUS
BASES AND WHATEVER POLITICAL ASSETS THE BRITISH HAVE
IN THE AREA AS WELL AS IN THE UN.

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